

NEBRASKA

Information Technology Services

Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

The Mission of Information Technology Services is to serve the citizens of Nebraska by providing premier information technology leadership, policy and operations, which facilitate an effective, responsive and efficient government.

Mainframe Tape Technology Update

Fred Lupher

In the January newsletter, Tom told you about the mainframe tape technology upgrade. As we move forward, we plan to keep you apprised of our progress, and provide tips that may be helpful to you.

We will be changing the way we charge back for tape usage. Currently, you are billed for tape mounts. Regardless of whether you write a megabyte or a gigabyte of data to a tape, or how long you retain that data, the cost to you is the same. This made some sense when labor costs were a large component of our tape operating budget. That will all change once we have migrated to the new technology.

The current tape mount charges will be eliminated. Instead, we will bill for gigabytes (1,000,000,000) stored. Once a dataset is written, there will be a daily per gigabyte cost to you, until the dataset is scratched. The per gigabyte rate has yet to be established, but we do know that it will be considerably cheaper than DASD storage.

We expect some customers to benefit from the new metric, while others could potentially pay more. It would be advisable to take a look at your current tape retention practices. Are you keeping datasets longer than is necessary? Are you keeping excessive generations? Addressing these areas could have a significant impact on your future tape storage cost.

Lotus Notes User Tips

E-Mail Archiving

Did you know that archiving service is available for Lotus Notes users? Archiving essentially takes "old" items and puts them into an archive folder -- you can still get to archived items easily, but they don't clutter up your main mail file and slow you down. Archiving is an automatic process too, so you can keep doing your job and let the server take care of sorting through "last used" dates, etc.

Documents in your archive are never deleted by the server. E-mail users will need to review their current files AND their archives on a regular basis to clean up

unnneeded e-mail. As you delete, keep in mind the records retention rules set in place for your organization.

If you have questions about archiving, contact the Office of the CIO Help Desk, Marcia Stewart, or Dale Hermsen.

When to Avoid Using E-Mail

We all know that if you want to successfully accomplish a task, you should select the proper tool. You don't use a sledge hammer to fix a leaky faucet. The sledge hammer is a great tool, but it's just not the best tool in this case. Likewise, e-mail is a very effective tool for communicating but has limitations too. When starting a message, ask yourself if e-mail is the best tool for the job. Here are some cases where it is not.

1. Confidential information



Confidentiality is an important issue in most organizations. We tend to be less guarded when using e-mail because of its informal nature. Yet once you send an e-mail, you have little control over how the recipient handles it. Unless you select the option to "Prevent Copying" the recipient can print it out or forward your note to anyone. Also once an e-mail leaves the security of the state network, it is vulnerable to tampering and malicious software tools unless you use a secure system such as HHSS's Secure Information Exchange (SIX) on Lotus Notes. The state uses appropriate tools such as workflow applications instead of e-mail for automating processes such as performance evaluations and or benefits enrollment and secure systems are used to exchange confidential client data with outside business partners.

2. Requests that demand immediate action

Another type of communication that is not suited to e-mail is anything that requires immediate action. Do you respond immediately to every message you receive? You may diligently try to answer messages as soon as possible, but messages can come in when you are away from your desk.

When you send an e-mail, there is no guarantee that the recipient is available. Also, the recipient is under no obligation to respond immediately. Lotus Notes' Out-of-Office feature helps in this regard by sending a courtesy message, but if someone needs information immediately, there are better communication tools such as the Help Desk system, the phone, or a face-to-face discussion.

3. Emotional or sensitive messages

Another instance when you should avoid using e-mail is when you are upset. E-mail is a quick communications tool and may not provide you the time to reflect on an issue and compose a proper message. Additionally e-mail messages lack the tone of voice, facial expression, and body language that comprise most of our message's

meaning. E-mail can be misinterpreted easily. Considering those two factors, it is best to handle sensitive situations face-to-face rather than through e-mail.

Although e-mail is an excellent business tool that can enhance your work, it should not be used in all situations. When you recognize the pros and cons of e-mail, you can use it more effectively.

Spring Clean-up

If you're tired of winter and cold temperatures, think spring. Now is a good time to do some spring cleaning in your mail and archive files.

1. How to clean up e-mail

If an e-mail clean-up sounds like an arduous task, here are some suggestions to simplify things:

- **First look at your folders.** Open your folders to see if you can clear out duplicate information or documents from a project that has ended. Keep in mind your agency retention policy – item 3 on this list.
- **Sort e-mail by date** – Go to the All Documents view and sort by date. Review the oldest documents and determine if they should be kept or discarded.
- **Sort by size** – While in the All Documents view, sort by size. Some of your largest e-mail may contain attachments that could be deleted or stored outside your mail or archive file.



2. Location

If an e-mail message needs to be saved, is your e-mail file and archive the best location for the document? A number of agencies and Office of the CIO teams have a team mail-in database where important documents can be centrally filed and easily located by team members. If important documents are being kept by several team members, centrally locating those records is even better – it reduces the size of multiple individual mail files and makes it easier for you to find the e-mails you choose to retain in your own file.

3. Records Retention

If you are not familiar with the records retention policies that apply to your e-mail, ask. There are various categories of records. Some have only short term informational value and should definitely be deleted in a short time – examples are a Help Desk downtime message or a lunch reminder. Others are more important and

should be saved for a specified period of time – an example is key project documentation or a policy message.

And finally, if you hate spring cleaning – try taking an hour each month to review your archived messages. Put a reminder on your calendar to do it. For most of us, it's much easier to do a little at a time, as our time permits, to keep things manageable.

User Tip! Getting Your E-Mail Delivered



While we'd like to think most villains wear a black hat so that we can spot them a long way off, did you know that your wonderfully convenient personal address book sitting right there on your computer also can be pesky if you don't watch out?

Here's a recent problem: We had a call from someone sending a note to a coworker. The note came back as undeliverable! The sender checked the NEBRLN address book and there's the person's name. So what's the problem? We took a peek at their personal address book and there was the entry – same person, but an outdated address!

The state keeps two address books – the NEBRLN Address Book containing most of the state Lotus Notes users and the All State Address Book with other e-mail users. These address books are on the servers so they get updated automatically as people move around or join or leave state employment daily. But your own address book? It's your personal work file, it resides on your hard drive, and thus you need to keep it updated with the most recent addresses.

Suggestion: For your Personal Address Book, keep it small and keep it updated on a regular basis. Don't duplicate names and addresses that are in the public, and automatically maintained, address books.

Here's another typical problem. You have a coworker's home e-mail address in your Personal Address Book. So there is a Jane Programmer (Jane Programmer/CIO/NEBRLN) in the NEBRLN Address Book and a Jane Programmer (jp123@yahoo.com) in your own address book. In this scenario, when you type in Jane Programmer, the automatic lookup will present those options and if you aren't careful while addressing you may accidentally send to the wrong address. Jane will see that note this evening when she goes home.

Suggestion: It's better to give Jane's entry a nickname in your personal address book, such as Home Email Jane, so that there is just one Jane Programmer to select.

On the Horizon

LotusSphere 2007 was held in January and the news coming from Orlando was that **Lotus Notes Version 8** will be out this summer. Just as always, we will be able to

jump right into it and find all the things we use on a daily basis and yet there will be new features. One is an updated look -- that has not happened since the move to Version 6. Notes 8 will also allow you to use Open Document Format (ODF) in addition to Word, Excel, etc. so that you won't need to jump back and forth between applications. Look for more news soon!



Smart Upgrades are available for Lotus Notes now. Several agencies have helped us pilot this program. When a new version of Lotus Notes is available, it can be made available in your choices on the Action bar. Click and you're done.

Microsoft Vista has been released and agencies who want to move forward with that new operating system can do so if you are at Lotus Notes 7.02 or above. Other versions may work with Vista, but since Notes 8 will be available soon it's a good time for users to bring their software up-to-date.

Change in Language Line Instructions

Recently the Office of the CIO-Network Services implemented a change with Language Line when utilizing an interpreter for communicating with non-English speaking clients. Now, a 10 digit Personal Code needs to be used instead of the previous 7 digit Personal Code. The 10 digit Personal Code consists of the area code and phone number from the State Agency phone from which you are placing the call. Following is a brief reminder of the information contained in the Quick Reference Guide provided by Language Line Services.

When receiving a call:

1. Use Conference Hold to place the non-English speaker on hold.
2. Dial 1 800 874-9426
3. Press 1 for Spanish. Press 2 for all other languages. You may press 0 or stay on the line for assistance.
4. Enter on your telephone keypad or provide the representative: your 6-digit Client ID: 535010; Organization Name: State of Nebraska; Personal Code: 10 digit phone number.

5. Brief the Interpreter. Summarize what you wish to accomplish and give any special instructions.

6. Add the non-English speaker to the line.

When placing a call to a non-English speaker, begin at Step 2. If you need assistance when placing a call to a non-English speaker, you may press 0 to transfer to a representative at the beginning of the call.

Please Note: Language Line validates the 10 digit Personal Code against a list that has been provided to them by the State. If a valid State 10 digit Personal Code is not given to them, they will not process your call.

Please contact Renee Bramhall at (402)471-4701 if you have any questions regarding the change in Language Line Instructions.

2007 Nebraska State Government Directories

The 2007 Nebraska State Government Directory has been distributed to all state agencies. Thank you to all of the Agency Communications Coordinators who again this year provided assistance with this annual project.

Directories can be purchased on line by visiting http://its.ne.gov/network_serv/admin/important_info.html or by contacting the Office of the CIO – Network Services at (402) 471-4701. The cost to the general public for the directory is \$5.00 per copy. The information contained within the directory is also available on the Internet at <http://www.state.ne.us>, select Your Government, then select either State Agencies, for information regarding each individual State Agency; or select State Employee Directory, for information on an individual state employee or employees listed by State Agency.

Directory Listing Closing Dates

City / Location	Due Date
Arlington	April 1 st
Benkelman	May 1 st
Cody	April 15 th
Fremont	May 1 st
Grand Island	April 15 th
Norfolk	May 15 th
Sidney/Kimball	May 15 th

If you have questions about directory closing dates please contact Renee at 402-471-4701.

SkillSoft CBT Courses

There are currently 250 course titles in four categories (business skills, IT end users, IT professional and certification). Business skill courses are available in the areas of

management, personal development, communication, customer service, human resources, project management and team building. Some of the IT end user courses available include Microsoft Office products, Lotus Notes and Adobe Acrobat. Professional IT courses focus on enterprise data systems, Internet & network, operating systems and servers, software development and web design solutions.

New courses on SQL Server 2005, Linux and .NET topics have been added to the library. There are a number of courses that have been deactivated; these courses are available for check out. Contact Judy for a list of deactivated courses (471-7732 or judy.davidsonwhitehead@cio.ne.gov).

Participating agency personnel have access to all 250 courses. Note to participating groups if you experience problems with the courses or logging in please contact the CIO Help Desk to open a problem ticket (471- 4636 or IHELP).

The Office of the CIO offers two user options. The first option is group participation which is base on the number of full time employees (FTEs). See rate table at <http://its.ne.gov>. The second option is single course pricing at \$90.00 for technical course and \$50.00 for non-technical courses. If interested in learning more about the SkillsSoft CBT options contact Judy Davidson-Whitehead (471-7732 or judy.davidsonwhitehead@cio.ne.gov).

Training Tapes

VHS training tapes on a variety of technology topics are available for check out. The featured video for March is "Six Cardinal Rules of Customer Service". The video focuses on customer service blunders that plaque the business world with advice on how to avoid them. This is a humorous video that's an excellent customer service discussion starter.

The recommended approach is to view and then discuss the video contents in relationship to what your current practices are. This video is a product of The Telephone Doctor and is approximately 20 minutes in length and is closed-captioned. Use of the tape is free to customers of the Office of the CIO.

Contact Judy Davidson, 402-471-7732 or judy.davidsonwhitehead@cio.ne.gov if you require additional information or to request a full video library listing.